Book Reviews

BRACHIAL PLEXUS INJURIES—Robert D. Leffert, MD, Associate Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, Harvard Medical School, and Chief of the Surgical Upper Extremity Rehabilitation Unit and of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. Churchill Livingstone Inc, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1985. 235 pages, $50.

Brachial Plexus Injuries is an extensive monograph consisting of 11 chapters and 243 total pages covering the subject in detail. It includes chapters on the anatomy of the brachial plexus, closed and open injuries of the brachial plexus, supraclavicular and infraclavicular injuries, assessment of the neuropathy related to the brachial plexus, and gives us detailed plans for both conservative and operative treatment. The final chapter is on peripheral reconstruction of the upper limb following brachial plexus injury.

Brachial plexus injury is one of the major unresolved problems in trauma. Robert D. Leffert, MD, is one of the acknowledged world experts in management of the injury. Thus, his approach to this challenging problem should be of interest to the neurosurgeon, orthopedic surgeon, hand surgeon, and perhaps the general surgeon interested in trauma, as well.

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REPRODUCTIVE FAILURE—Edited by Alan H. DeCherney, MD, The John Slade Ely Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Director, Division of Reproductive Endocrinology, Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut. Churchill Livingstone Inc, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1986. 302 pages, $45.

Dr DeCherney has edited a simple, easy-to-read textbook that presents a complex topic in a straightforward manner. He has combined in one book the scope of reproductive failure. Most texts in this area focus on infertility and leave the problems of ectopic pregnancy, habitual abortion, and so forth, to other authors. By combining these topics in one book, Dr DeCherney has focused on the major issue that our patients face: taking home a viable infant.

The book begins with a fascinating review of the history of reproductive failure. This is followed by a discussion of the epidemiology, which is well written and presents the statistics from a different point of view. I was pleased to see that the authors also included data on the male factor. Although found in reference books on infertility, it is not usually discussed in obstetric or gynecologic books dealing with other problem areas nor is it covered in this much detail in books on infertility. The only concern I have with the book is in the area of infertility surgery. This is a very complex topic, and the author presents it in a clear concise fashion; however, the implication is that it can be done by anyone.

In summary, I would recommend this book to any physician who deals with patients with reproductive failure.

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SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPY OF NORMAL AND ABNORMAL HUMAN SKIN—Walter H. Wilborn, PhD, Professor of Anatomy and Director; Barbara M. Hyde, MTA, Electron Microscopy Specialist and Research Associate, and Leopoldo F. Montes, MD, Adjunct Professor of Anatomy and Dermatology Research, Electron Microscopy Center, University of South Alabama College of Medicine, Mobile. VCH Publishers, Inc, 220 E 23rd St, Suite 909, New York, NY 10010, 1986. 219 pages, $49.50.

Visually oriented physicians and scientists may desire to know how the microscopic anatomy of the skin translates into a three-dimensional structure. For such individuals, scanning electron microscopy (SEM) provides a means to learn how the pieces fit together.

In *Scanning Electron Microscopy of Normal and Abnormal Skin,* Wilborn, Hyde, and Montes provide a fascinating atlas of the structure of skin. This represents the first comprehensive attempt to contruct an SEM picture of the development of fetal skin, of the structure of normal adult skin, and of the alterations in disease entities. The electron micrographs are well-labeled and provide an opportunity for the non-expert to appreciate the complex three-dimensional anatomy of the skin. The authors, fortunately, anticipated that individuals unfamiliar with SEM might use this atlas, so they provide the reader with a concise, simplified explanation of the technique and the equipment used. They also have included appropriate illustrations of cutaneous anatomy, as well as examples of light microscopic and transmission electron-microscopic findings. Each section of the book also includes a pertinent bibliography.

Not all of the micrographs are of excellent quality, and some repeat examples of the same features shown in adjacent micrographs. Although interesting examples of SEM findings in acne, psoriasis, seborrheic keratosis, capillary hemangioma, basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, keratoacanthoma, and pigmented nevus are shown, for the most part, the scanning electron micrographs included do not significantly enhance our understanding of the pathogenesis of these disease entities.

This book is not one that should be on everyone's shelf. However, it represents the compilation of a series of unique micrographs of the skin and should be a valuable resource in medical libraries. Those scientists with special interest in fetal skin, structure and function of the skin, and electron microscopy may find this atlas of sufficient interest to want personal copies.

The authors of this book should be commended for integrating scanning electron microscopy findings into a unique, understandable volume on the structure of the skin.

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WOUND CARE—William M. Cocke, Jr, MD, Professor of Surgery; Raleigh R. White IV, MD, Professor of Surgery; Dennis J. Lynch, MD, Professor of Surgery and Chief, and Charles N. Verheyden, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Surgery, Division of Plastic Surgery, Department of Surgery, Scott and White Clinic, Texas A&M University College of Medicine, Temple, Texas. Churchill Livingstone Inc, 1560 Broadway, New York, NY 10036, 1986. 113 pages, $25.

Wound Care summarizes the basic principles of wound healing and illustrates some of the fundamental concepts of wound management with selected cases representating common acute, subacute, and chronic wounds. The indications for simple primary wound closure are contrasted with open wound care and delayed closure. Specific examples emphasize the role of debridement and dressing care in wound control as prerequisites for either spontaneous healing or secondary closure. Systemic and local factors that inhibit wound healing are identified, together with recommended correction of reversible factors such as malnutrition, infection, hypoxia, and hyperglycemia. The techniques suggested for wound repair range from simple suture, skin grafting, and local flap transposition to distant free tissue transplantation. Separate consideration is given to the management of specific wounds such as venous stasis ulceration, burn injury, bites, and the "difficult" wound that is complicated by radiation injury, malignancy, osteomyelitis, and threatened limb loss.

This monograph is a useful introduction to the broad and complex subject of wound healing. Basic definitions of wound healing physiology, wound pathology, and surgical principles are accurately and simply stated but perhaps necessarily incomplete as a result of the brevity of the volume. Notable was the absence of reference to wound bacteriology in the discussion of wound control, when the use of quantitative cultures and systemic or topical antimicrobial agents in both open and burn wounds has been shown to substantially influence both the accurate timing and the success of delayed wound closure. Similarly, a brief discussion of the techniques of local anesthesia administration and the pharmacology of lidocaine (with and without epinephrine) and its toxicity would have complemented the discussion of acute suture repair of simple and complex lacerations.

Although principles of wound care are illustrated by clinical case examples, many of the management solutions cannot be interpreted as a practice guide for the nonsurgeon. For example, the decisions to debride an ischemic amputation stump, to allow a facial wound to heal by secondary intention, or to remove a breast implant clearly should be made and executed by the primary surgeon. Many of the more challenging wounds involving exposure of bone, major vessels, and tendons require consultation with plastic surgeons or at least reconstructive surgeons with expertise in wound coverage and familiarity with techniques such as skin grafting, flap design, and microvascular tissue transfer. A similar approach of consultation is standard practice for the repair of complex facial soft tissue injury, and such wounds are not appropriately triaged to health care personnel without specialty training.

In summary, *Wound Care* is a useful introductory volume for health care professionals in primary care, for medical students, and possibly for nonsurgeon physicians. Its scope is broad as a brief, updated overview of the fundamental generic approaches to wound care, but its depth is not sufficient either as a practical guide for nonsurgeon physicians or as a practice guide for the nonspecialized surgeon.

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